

# The Style Invitational

## Week 575: T Hee Hee



BY MELISSA CANNAROZZI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This week's contests: We're running low on coveted Loser T-Shirts again. When we finally roused cartoonist Bob Staake out of his Cape Cod beach chair to tell him it was time for him to think of a new design, Bob decided, um, magnanimously that he would let you come up with new ideas for both front and back. Bob will choose the winning idea for the front from a list of finalists, and will then draw the cartoon. Winner gets Bob's original. The winning slogan or simple design for the back gets the Inker. The front needs to say "Loser" along with the picture. You don't have to draw anything; just tell us your idea. Pictured are the current model (center) and some previous versions.

Runners-up all win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Sept. 20. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are

judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published Oct. 10. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

Report from Week 571, in which we asked for neologisms containing the letters T, H, E and S, consecutively but in any order: It was so imaginative of 99 percent of all entrants to send in "TheStyLeinVitaTionaL." This was a great contest. We'll do it again sometime, with another set of letters.

Fourth Runner-Up: Gethsemony: Thirty pieces of silver. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Third Runner-Up: Smahtes: From the only state that didn't vote for Nixon in '72. (Dan Seidman, Watertown, Mass.)

Second Runner-Up: Temple-shtemple: The chant some Jews say before tucking into their traditional Yom Kippur brunch. (Bill Spencer, Exeter, N.H.)

First Runner-Up, winner of the Defense Intelligence Agency coffee mug and stealth bomber bandanna: Whetstoned: Under the misperception that one's wits are sharpened by pot-smoking. (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

And the winner of the Inker: Transvestheight: The distance between the jockstrap and the bra. (Frank Mullen, Aledo, Ill.)

And herE'S The Honorable Mention list:

Bouillabaissetherapy: Fish soup for the soul. (Chris Doyle)

Alphabeths: Queens Elizabeth I and II. (Walt Johnston, Woodstock, Md.)

Arewetheresyshriek: A summer sound heard often on I-95. (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)

Busthell: The place between the plates of the mammogram machine. (Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

Westhamptonboroughminsterburginshire: A small village in England, pronounced "Wesher." (Chris Doyle)

Porchestra: A bluegrass band. (Kyle Hendrickson, Dunkirk)

Braphets: People who can guess your cup size (see also: Chestimators). (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.; Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Huhster: A president who leaves his audience with furrowed brow, as when saying, "I am mindful not only of preserving executive powers for myself, but for predecessors as well." (Walt Johnston)

Kashtent: Where you find the moneychanger at an Uzbek bazaar. (Chris Doyle)

Allrightest: Superlatively whatever. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

Lushetero: A gay man who'll make a pass at a woman when he's drunk, then claim the next morning that he doesn't remember a thing. (Tom Witte)

Suckotesh: A combination of lima beans, corn and pabulum. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Prophetsharing: An interfaith service. (Chris Doyle)

Sethwho: Response to the bartender's calling "Last round." (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Cystheap: Why you don't want to look in those biohazard containers. (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

Fehtser: A wine critic. (Dan Seidman)

Chesterdrawers: Overalls. (Chris Doyle)

Horsethong: Nickname for XXXL underpants. (Mark Young, Washington)

Stonesthrow: A unit of distance used in the Middle East. (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

Hesteria: A Vassar student's obsession with getting all A's. (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Lushter: The gleam on a drunk's nose. (Dan Seidman)

Wasteauteur: The corollary to conspicuous consumption: the snob appeal of how much one throws away. (Brendan Beary)

Winchesterfield: A smoking gun. (Chris Doyle)

Triumphsetback: A Pyrrhic victory. (Chris Doyle)

Assthetes: The morons you try to drown out as they spew dilettante blather in art galleries and cinema lobbies. (Elisa Nichols, Kensington)

Whosthegroom: A common question at some Massachusetts weddings. (Dave Komornik)

Teshtosterone: A hormone that paradoxically deepens the voice but makes one seem wimpy. (Brendan Beary)

Zygoteship: The Love Boat. (Peter Metrisko, Plymouth, Minn.)

Absinthespian: An actor who goes to Japan to appear in liquor commercials. (Mark Young)

Frodosynthesis: The one-volume condensation of "The Lord of the Rings." (Ben Schwalb, Severna Park)

Hithest and Thithest: Middle English forms of "right here" and "right there." (Peter Metrisko)

Loathescorn: A hate-hate relationship. (Chris Doyle)

Thesauropod: An old-timer whose conversation plods along... in search of... the word that is most... efficacious. (Brendan Beary)

Thespeein: The good ol' boys showing off on the shoulder as the relieve themselves in the glare of the headlights. (Dave Prevar)

Thespeons: Extras. (Russell Beland)

Kennethstarr: To harry a public figure for sexual indiscretions. (Chris Doyle)

Thithes: People who are afraid of getting their front teeth knocked out. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

Kithsex: Hey, what are friends for? (Chris Doyle)

Nibletshthead: An Iowan, to a Minnesotan. (Peter Metrisko)

Reconditeshlocking: Trying to get ink with highbrow but lame Invitational entries. (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

And Last: Hste: When there's just no time for spelling the whole word. (Eric Murphy, Chicago)

### MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

## Rude Awakenings

"Causing a scene" is an etiquette felony. The injunction against raising a ruckus in public was once so well understood that polite people had a hard time overcoming their proper inhibitions in cases of emergency. They had to reassure themselves that it was quite all right, under the right circumstances, to yell "Fire!" or "Help!" or "Watch out, there's a piano about to fall on your head!"

No longer. If you can't get on reality television, at least you can make a public scene.

What has long driven Miss Manners even wilder than she naturally is that many of the louts who make unnecessary scenes claim to be acting in the name of etiquette. Often they report to her how they detected a transgression and humiliated the transgressor with a whopping transgression of their own. Then they wait for Miss Manners to applaud.

And now we are seeing Act 2. Victims of rudeness who do not retaliate in kind (meaning rudeness, not kindness) feel the shame of a duty neglected, and expect Miss Manners to coach them back into the fray.

"I was sitting at a bar, minding my own business and enjoying a refreshing boisson," writes a Gentle Reader, "when a man sat down next to me, lit a cigarette, and began to blow smoke in my face and all over the rest of me."

"My first instinct was to move to another seat at the bar, where there were no smokers. However, the etiquette of this move was unclear to me. Should I just stand up and walk to a different seat with my drink, or should I excuse myself and then move, or should I tell him that I am moving because I don't like being poisoned by strangers in public places?"

A lady who was bawled out in the grocery store for leaving her cart in the middle of the aisle while she went to find plastic bags for her vegetables ruefully admitted that she had simply fled, not knowing what to say. "She was one of those loud-mouthed types, and I should have told her off when I had the chance."

"I'm trying to teach my kid good sportsmanship, and one of the fathers at his school boos visiting teams at the soccer games," a gentleman writes. "So I'm thinking of organizing the other fathers to boo him the next time he hogs the microphone at the parents' meeting."

"It was a perfect summer day, Red Sox in town, life couldn't be better," writes another Gentle Reader. "Except that the woman directly behind us never stopped talking for nine innings. She was some sort of

baseball writer and let everyone for two rows know how important and connected to the players she is and how much she knows about the game. She never drew a breath until I thought I was going to go insane. Is that just part of life in being in a public area? Is there a polite way to ask someone to please shut up, if even for just a minute? Should we have moved and told her why?"

Miss Manners regrets having to say that yes, encountering rude people is a part of life in public areas. So are brawls in bars, shouting matches in grocery stores, derisive disruptions at meetings and fights in the bleachers.

But one can walk away rather than enter the fray. Because scenes often lead to violence, those who don't fight back seem oddly to fear the charge of cowardice. But they should not fear the even more bizarre charge of having taken up the very rudeness they deplore.

#### Dear Miss Manners:

I was called for jury duty recently. I realized, after I had been questioned by the judge with the usual suitability-for-jury-service questions, that I was the only one of the group that had answered "Yes/No, sir," or "Yes/No, Your Honor" to his questions. No one else questioned before or after me used any sort of honorifics with the judge or the lawyers who were doing the questioning.

I was left wondering if my use of honorifics in this situation was possibly perceived as out of place or antiquated? I also reflexively address other people in positions of authority, such as police officers, as "sir" or "ma'am." Am I being excessively formal for today's societal norms?

A courtroom is not an informal venue, as you would find out if trouble, rather than civic duty, had brought you there. Judges have far stricter means of enforcing etiquette than poor Miss Manners, who can only plead and scold.

So while a judge is unlikely to overlook the omission of the polite form you used, showing respect for his authority is a really good idea.

Feeling incorrect? E-mail your etiquette questions to Miss Manners (who is distraught that she cannot reply personally) at MissManners@unitedmedia.com or mail to United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

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### DEAR ABBY

#### Dear Abby:

My letter concerns a letter in your column. It was written by a woman who had suffered a heart attack and was driven to the hospital by her husband.

I have been a paramedic for 18 years. It is important your readers understand that attempting to drive yourself or a loved one to a hospital is a bad idea. The 911 emergency number was put in place to help the sick and injured in a timely manner. Most citizens are not aware of the capabilities of their local emergency medical services agencies.

Paramedics bring the emergency room to the patient's home. We are capable of treating chest pain and, in many cases, of diagnosing a heart attack in the patient's living room.

This information is relayed directly to the emergency room, where a doctor can assemble a cardiac catheterization team to promptly treat the heart attack when the patient arrives. (Not every hospital can provide cardiac catheterization, so we offer the patient a choice to go directly to a properly equipped facility.) In addition, we administer medications immediately.

The biggest delay in receiving prompt care is delay in calling 911, because of denial. "Time is muscle" is our saying. The more time you waste, the more heart muscle is damaged. The average person driving someone to a hospital cannot treat the person, and also tends to speed and drive in an unsafe manner. Please inform your readers, Abby.

Paul Toscano, Watervliet, N.Y.

Thank you for the valuable reminder that 911 is for life-threatening emergencies and the expertise of the technicians can mean the difference between life and death.

#### Dear Abby:

My 3-year-old daughter was recently invited to a birthday party for two of her classmates (twins). The

party is scheduled for a weeknight from 6 to 8:30—the time I have set for bath time, story time and lights out at 8.

Would I be rude and insensitive if I do not permit my daughter to attend? I don't want to offend the mother, but I don't want to rev my child up with sugary party snacks and activities right before a late bedtime.

Confused in Texas

Rude and insensitive? No. Rigid? Yes. I'm willing to bet that the mother of the twins is a working woman and the party would be earlier if it was possible. I see no harm in bending the rules or flexing your daughter's schedule once in a while. Of course, you will be going with your daughter to the party, so monitoring what she eats should be a cinch. Feeding your daughter a healthful meal before the party should ensure that she won't overdose on sugar. I say, let her go.

#### Dear Abby:

When my 12-year-old daughter spends the night somewhere other than home, I don't sleep well. When she goes away to camp for a week, I hardly sleep at all. I am not up all night pacing the floor, worrying about her—I just can't sleep.

My sister tells me that this is not normal. Am I abnormal for losing sleep when my daughter is away?

Sleepless Near Seattle

No, you are not abnormal. You are a vigilant parent. Many parents cannot sleep unless they know their children are safe in their own beds and under their own roof.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

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### BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

N-S vulnerable  
NORTH  
♠ A K 6 2  
♥ 10 9 3  
♦ A 7 3  
♣ 8 6 5

WEST (D)  
♠ Q 10 9 7 3  
♥ K  
♦ K 10 5  
♣ A Q 3 2

SOUTH  
♠ 8 4  
♥ A Q J 7 4  
♦ J 9 8  
♣ K 7 4

The bidding:

West North East South  
1 ♠ Pass Pass 2 ♥

All Pass  
Opening lead — ♦ 5

If East had opened one spade, South wouldn't have risked an overcall of two hearts (barring the recent demise of a rich uncle). If West had some hearts and some points, South might play there doubled, and if North had nothing, as partners all too often do, South might lose 1,100 points when East-West didn't even have a game.

But after West opened one spade and North and East passed, South could afford to bid and couldn't afford to pass.

North was marked with some points since East-West hadn't bid any higher, so South could "bal-

ance" with a light hand to prevent his opponents from buying the deal cheaply.

If South had overcalled in the direct position, North would have invited game, but North knew South's balancing overcall might be based on high values.

Hence North didn't even try for game. He had 11 good points, but South had bid most of them when he balanced.

Even the modest contract of two hearts was at risk. Dummy played low on the first diamond, and East took the queen and shifted to the

jack of clubs; four, three, five. The 10 of clubs also won, and East shifted back to diamonds: West's 10 forced out the ace.

South had another diamond and another club to lose; he couldn't afford a trump loser. He'd seen East play a queen and a jack, and East probably had a spade honor. If West had a spade suit headed by the Q-J, he'd have led the queen of spades, not a diamond from the king.

So South declined the trump finesse and led a trump to his ace. His luck was in: making two.

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Next Week: The Limerixicon, or Alpha Doggerel